

**Amended Minutes**  
**Gresham Task Force on Housing**

Wednesday, November 28, 2018 - 6:00 PM  
Gresham City Hall – Conference Center  
1333 NW Eastman Parkway – Gresham, OR 97030

**Members Present:**

Cary Watters  
Catherine Nicewood  
Francisco Rodriguez  
Greg Knakal  
Jackie Bradford  
Jeff Edinger  
Laura Bain Pramuk  
Michael Davis  
Pamela Phan  
Richard Anderson  
Scott Kilgo  
Teresa Carr  
Travis Stovall

**Members Absent:**

Deborah Olson (Excused)

**Staff Members Present:**

Erik Jensen, Facilitator, Jensen Strategies  
Emily Ramelb, Jensen Strategies  
Brian Monberg, Staff Liaison  
Teresa Hall, Staff Liaison  
Eric Chambers, Director of Gov't. Relations.  
Rosalie Diaz, Recording Secretary

**Council Liaisons Present:**

Janine Gladfelter  
Mario Palmero

**Visitors:**

David Widmark  
Cyndi  
Carol  
Tiffany

**1. Call to Order**

Brian Monberg called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

City of Gresham received a grant of via the Portland Housing Project to provide affordable housing, about 3,900 homes. Staff are learning and understanding how that will impact the City.

**2. Minutes of October 28 (Pamela Phan abstained)**

A motion was made by Erik Jensen and seconded by Michael Davis to:

**“Approve the minutes for the October 28 Task Force on Housing Meeting”**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**3. Minutes of September 26**

A motion was made by Travis Stovall and seconded by Richard Anderson to:

**“Approve the minutes for the September 26 Task Force on Housing Meeting”**

**MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**4. Task Force Discussion**

Additional information was requested for the services and organizations that were presented: goal

progress, how funds were utilized, which services resulted as most effective, how many people have been served, and whether outcome benefits were long-term or short-term. Staff will keep the Task Force informed on the most current (affordable housing) policy and program updates. An observation was made about how much authority the government has over rules and guidelines regarding housing, and what role the City or the Task Force has in those processes. It was clarified that the Land Use Program helps determine what type of housing can be developed and in what area. The Urban Growth Boundary was noted as a large area for housing development opportunities. Staff shared that plans for Pleasant Valley and Springwater are over 10 years old and are worth further discussion on those options. Information was requested regarding displacement of Gresham residents, and how existing City programs are helping prevent this from occurring. The City Council Work plan for 2019 was sought, and staff confirmed that it will be available when adopted in early 2019.

For a varied housing mix in the City, it was suggested to consider adopting programs that incentivize private developers, such as the Vertical Housing Program. This program grants private developers abatement in their taxes over the course of ten years; for market-based housing, developers may receive up to a 60% reduction in their taxes, if the project involves affordable housing, then developers can receive up to an 80% reduction. In addition, it was requested to include benefits to the community within these efforts, such as the Inclusionary Zoning Policy currently active in Portland and other cities. An alternate view of this policy was shared as a flawed system that merits closer examination to avoid negative outcomes in Gresham.

Another approach to benefit both developers and tenants was proposed; cutting development fees or expediting design with an assurance to commit to rent accommodations or term lengths. Data trends of evictions via lease terminations and rent hikes causing displacement and change in the demographics of the City, was requested.

An observation was made about the inconsistency within the rental housing inspections. An initial inspection may give the landlords or property owners a required set of tasks to bring the rental unit up to code, but a secondary review may bring a different set of tasks to be completed. It was suggested to keep the same inspector throughout the beginning and end of each rental housing inspection to avoid confusion and miscommunication. It was also suggested to pair planners and inspectors to come to a mutual understanding of code requirements and solutions. It was shared that when the Rental Inspection Program initiated, inspections were done six or more units at time and at random when solicited, and inspectors would follow up with the resolutions. However, it was shared that as recent as last month, some tenants who requested inspections and were tended resolutions experienced rent increases or no-cause evictions as retaliation to those who requested the inspections. Resolution was suggested involving anonymity and making inspections throughout the entire property at random. Tenant awareness may not be sufficient to avoid retaliation from landlords, and if a tenant independently seeks legal accountability, they must go through a small claims court.

Increased use of the Urban Renewal Program was offered, to help with the funding gap in developing affordable housing. Prioritizing Gresham residents to become homeowners would be beneficial for both residents and developers with existing properties that can be brought up to code, according to Task Force feedback. Residents would have a higher possibility to become home-owners, and developers would see faster turnaround on selling their new construction projects. It was suggested to review the data report that Portland released regarding their Inclusionary Zoning in September 2018 (<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/article/698886> ). A suggestion was made to discourage already profitable entities from continuing to grow their profit off of tenants. Another perspective shared was that the intent of developers is to assure stability for both developers and tenants. It was added that

developers do not want displacement to occur since turning over units adds additional costs. It was recognized that there are a variety of developers and appreciation was expressed for developers that take big risks with little returns. However, it was also noted that there are others that prioritize profit over housing stability for the community. It was suggested that the root that caused the housing crisis be addressed from the Task Force recommendations.

The first-time home-buyer and voucher programs were viewed as beneficial to the community. Rockwood was used as an example of design-restricted limitations that make it difficult to build housing for the elderly, foster care, and the construction of duplexes, in which planners and architects would have to consult with the Design Commission and may end up with large unplanned costs. Some residents on fixed income fall through the cracks just from a \$100 difference that consequently doesn't meet their income requirements. Additional design standards are needed for a varied housing mix. It was noted that Portland has a lengthier process of up to two years to go through their Design Commission. It was suggested that the City of Gresham's Design Commission shouldn't be a roadblock to construction. A favorable view of Design standards was shared as a system that helps prevent construction durability issues throughout time.

It was noted that while programs such as HUD and CBDG are effective, they are dependent on restricted funding. It was suggested to look at removing some of the funding limitations to encourage folks with acres of developable land to build on their properties and ramp up first-time home-buyer programs.

Other options aside from the first-time home-buyer program were asked to be considered, such as investing on improving workforce opportunities, professional advancement programs, and financial development skills to help residents grow their wealth. It was shared that values of homes in Gresham have increased so much that residents with living-wage jobs still cannot afford to buy their first home, even with down payment assistance.

An observation was made about City Mediation services having little information regarding Oregon Tenant Law and that this sometimes causes residents to call the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT).

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Next meeting scheduled on January 9, 2019 at 6pm in the City Hall Conference Rooms 2A & 2B